



Cyclothymic Disorder: An Overview on Disorder and its Symptoms

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INTRODUCTION

Cyclothymia is a rare mood condition that shares many of the same symptoms as bipolar disorder but is milder and more persistent. If you have cyclothymia, you will have cyclic peaks and lows that last at least two years. Your lows of cyclothymic disorder are moderate depression rather than full-blown severe depression. Your euphoria is a sign of hypomania, which is a milder type of mania.

Cyclothymia can raise the risk of developing bipolar disorder (estimates range from a 15% to a 50% increased risk of being diagnosed with bipolar disorder if you have cyclothymia), and its highs and lows can affect your everyday life functions and relationships, so it's important to seek care before the disorder becomes completely disruptive.

The prevalence of cyclothymia in the general population is estimated to be between 0.4 percent and 1 percent, with men and women affected similarly. Women, on the other hand, are more likely to reach out for assistance. Although the condition usually begins in puberty, its onset is notoriously difficult to pinpoint. Individuals with cyclothymic disorder are more likely to suffer from attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), drug misuse, and sleep disturbances.

Symptoms

The standard diagnostic criteria from the American Psychiatric Association states that to be diagnosed with cyclothymia, one must meet all of the following:

- Multiple periods of hypomanic symptoms that do not meet criteria for a hypomanic episode and multiple periods of depressive symptoms that do not meet criteria for a major depressive episode for at least two years (one year for children and adolescents)
- Signs of hypomania and depression were present for at least half of the two-year period (one for children and adolescents), with no more than two consecutive months having no symptoms.
- No one has ever met the criteria for a major depressive disorder, psychotic episode, or hypomanic episode.

- Other psychiatric illnesses (such as schizoaffective disorder, schizophrenia, and delusional disorder) have been identified as a contributor to hypomanic and depressive symptoms.
- Drugs, alcohol misuse, or other medical problems have little effect on hypomanic and depressive symptoms.
- Hypomanic and depressive symptoms cause significant disruption in social, occupational, or other functional areas.

If You or Someone You Know has Cyclothymia, You can Experience the Following Depressive Signs and Symptoms

Feelings of sadness, emptiness, and hopelessness; Irritability; Feeling tearful; Sleep disturbances; Restlessness; Feelings of worthlessness and guilt; Fatigue; Concentration problems; Suicidal thoughts; Loss of interest in activities once considered pleasurable; Weight fluctuations – as a result of eating significantly more or less than usual; Lack of motivation; poor decision-making, preparation, or problem-solving skills; Low self-confidence; Pessimism, loneliness, submissiveness, social withdrawal, and difficulty resolving confrontation are all symptoms of pessimism. Life is devoid of significance and intent.

Hypomanic Signs and Symptoms can Include the Following if You or Someone You Know has Cyclothymia:

Euphoric state – exaggerated sense of well-being and happiness; Inflated self-esteem; Inflated optimism; Irritability and agitation; Decreased need for sleep; Racing thoughts; Poor judgment resulting in risky behaviors; Talking more than usual; Excessive physical activity; Easily distracted; Concentration problems; Increased drive to perform or reach goals; Hyperactivity – inability to sit still; Emotional instability – overreacting to events; Reckless thrill seeking (e.g., gambling, sports); Impulsivity; Irresponsibility.

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